The strawberries

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The strawberries

by FhimeChan

Summary

"Drop by drop the red liquid fell to the soil and seeped underground, soaking the bones buried within the roots."
Written for the prompt "Bones"

Notes

I decided that "Major Character Death" doesn't apply with ghosts, especially if their death isn't described :)
Still, beware! There is a pet burial in here!
Thank you @j9-j9 for betaing :)

In the middle of October the heat was still suffocating. A pale sun shone through the leaves of the great old oak and bathed the kid in green and gold; at his feet the crimson of the late strawberries poked between the grass. The too-sweet fragrance of the ripe fruits lingered under the curtain of leaves, intoxicating in the stagnant air.

Oblivious to the beauty, the kid cried in silence, hugging a small, furry thing, shaking with noiseless sobs. Thick blood trickled through his hands and smeared his pants, indistinguishable from the berries' juice.

Drop by drop the red liquid fell to the soil and seeped underground, soaking the bones buried within the roots.

It was a shift in perception, a change in the texture of the air.

He was alone, then he was not.

The invisible presence and the kid stayed in silence under the oak, mourning.

"Look who's here alone! The Graham crying cracker! Looooser!"
"He's holding his old dead rat, ugh, gross…"
"The lousy rat died, like his mum. Nobody wants to stay with the crybaby cracker!"

Will raised his head, swollen eyes burning with fury. He opened his mouth, but before he could speak something leapt between them, and there was blood.

A red spot widened on the yellow t-shirt of one of the kids, right over the shoulder. He staggered backwards and ran away with the others, screaming and clutching at the wound.

The thick red liquid dripped from the boy's mouth. It spread on his body with no concern for gravity, painting it visible in broad strokes. He turned to stare at Will, his eyes the same colour as the stains covering the crushed strawberries.

"That was wrong", Will said.

"Are you mad at me?" He inclined his head, curious.

Will breathed. "No."

"Are you scared of me?"

Will looked at the dripping blood, at the boy's dark eyes. "No."

He nodded, pleased. "Do you want help burying your pet?"

Will said yes.

They worked side by side under the oak, digging with their bare hands. Every scratch, every torn nail was a tribute to Will's beloved pet. With a sense of purpose, they covered the fur with dirt, leaves and a single untouched strawberry; life was ready to bloom again from the small form.

When they finished the boy offered his hand to Will, a silent invitation. Will took it, and felt bare bones under his fingers.

Together they walked away from the oak, followed by the smell of blood and strawberries.

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